



Are We Planning Our Urban Future? : East African SusWatch View on the World Habitat Day 2009

In December 1985, the United Nations General Assembly declared the first Monday of October to be "World Habitat Day" in recognition of the state of human settlements and the basic need for adequate shelter for all (UN Habitat). Its purpose is to call attention to the current global state of the human habitat and push towards adequate housing for all.



In view of this year's World Habitat Day theme (*Planning Our Urban Future*), the East African SusWatch Network commissioned a rapid assessment study in August 2009 in Busia, Homa bay and Musoma. This study which was carried out to highlight the status of the housing situation in the fast growing / secondary towns in the Lake Victoria basin, is aimed at reawakening political and other stakeholders' interest to take actions to address the housing gap as an obligation (more so from a human rights perspective).

Look out for SusWatch Network's summary of the study findings in *The East African Newspaper* (October 5 - 11, 2009) and in *The Mwananchi Newspaper* of Tanzania (Kiswahili version) on Monday October 5, 2009; as well as on UCSD website: www.ugandacoalition.or.ug.

TCSD holds meeting with Lake Victoria Basin Commission in Mwanza



Participants at the CSO/ LVBC Meeting held in Mwanza (Tanzania), September 8, 2009. Photo: TCSD

Tanzania Coalition for Sustainable Development (TCSD) organized a one day Lake Victoria Basin Commission Meeting that was convened at Kisumu, Mwanza on 8th September 2009 attended by over 30 participants from within the Lake Victoria region in Tanzania including LVBC focal point (Ministry of Water and Irrigation), CBOs, CSOs, government departments, government agencies, Lectures, and other stakeholders.

The Ministry of water and irrigation presented the investment opportunities in agriculture and agro-based industry, mining, tourism, manufacturing, natural resources, banking and insurance, transport among others. The key issues and challenges noted relate to lack of information flow to CBOs, CSOs and other stakeholders and actors in the lake Basin about key activities and responsibilities of the LVBC; lack of clear and initiatives to develop linkages that will mobilize all stakeholders working towards sustainable development in the basin; contradicting / unenforceable laws and rules; poor solid waste management; while Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) Reports are not shared with the communities where projects are undertaken. Similar CSO / LVBC meetings have already been held in Uganda and Kenya

2nd Annual Lake Victoria Basin Stakeholder's Forum, October 27 – 28, 2009 in Kisumu

Lake Victoria Basin Commission (LVBC) in collaboration with the Lead Partners Interagency network Forum, of which the East African SusWatch Network is part, has organized the **Second Annual Lake Victoria Basin (LVB) stakeholder's Forum**. The main objective of the Forum is to provide a platform for key stakeholders in the Lake Victoria basin to share and exchange experiences and challenges faced in contributing towards the shared development vision.



Poor sanitation: A decaying pit latrine that is still used in Makongeni Estate – Homa Bay (Kenya). Photo: UCSD

The East African SusWatch Network would like to reiterate its hope (see UCSD Ebulletin – May 2009) that the Forum will enable open and fair discussions, given the myriad challenges facing Lake Victoria in water (impact of the drop in water levels), transport, fisheries, agriculture, education, health and sanitation, and energy sectors. SusWatch also proposes that this Forum should also address the invisible aspects: **Innovations to wider participation** of the different stakeholders, how to build long-term synergies amongst development actors. For more information, please contact Mr. Saidi Matano (LVBC – Projects Development Officer, email: matano@lvbcsec.org)

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